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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the relationship between culture and curriculum, examining the ways in which school constituencies seek to manifest some aspect of culture in the school curriculum. These individuals and groups operate formally and informally to have schools become fitting means to some valued ends. The relationship between schools and their constituencies occurs in a complex cultural context, wherein individuals and groups are "agents" of a particular orientation that schools should reflect. At any given point in time, schools are the focus of a multitude of competing orientations directed to making schools fitting places, from some specified point of view. Macro- and micro-level theories are presented, which describe the divergent purposes of education--for assimilation, ethnic or community maintenance, economic competitiveness, status maintenance or reversal, and citizenship. Contains 189 references. (LMI)

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The Relationship Between Culture and Curriculum: A Many Fitting Thing

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Abstract

What happens in schools is not random because schools have constituencies. These are the individuals and groups, both proximate and distant, which perceive that they have a stake in the school experience. They operate formally and informally to have schools become fitting means to some ends which they value. The relationship between schools and their constituencies occurs in a complex cultural context, wherein individuals and groups are "agents" of a particular orientation that schools should reflect. At any given point in time, schools are the focus of a multitude of competing orientations directed to making schools fitting places, from some specified point of view.

The Relationship Between Culture and Curriculum: A Many Fitting Thing[1]

> Chief Poropot agrees that everyone must learn Portuguese. "The language of the Kaiapo is very ancient and it will never end," he says. But the women and the children need to learn Portuguese to defend themselves. "Defend themselves?" If they go to shop in Redencao, they have to talk," he says. "If they get sick, they cannot tell the doctor what they have."
>
> Simons (1989, p. 52)

Chief Poropot's words capture an issue of culture and curriculum at its most poignant level. The Kaiapo, a tribe of the once-remote Amazon River basin, now have frequent contact with non-Kaiapo Brazilian society. Mastering Portuguese, as did Chief Poropot and others of his tribe, facilitates informed access to the encompassing Brazilian culture; mastering Portuguese is a beginning for the Kaiapo to understand themselves in an extraordinarily different context than that of the jungle fastness which for centuries has sheltered and nurtured them. As Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1972) dramatized in Ambiguous Adventure, his fine novel of a fictional Muslim society in French West Africa, once-isolated tribes cannot retreat from the overwhelmingly dominant societies which inevitably confront them. Thus, if the Kaiapo or Kane's Muslim tribe, the Diallobe, strive to pursue their traditional cultures, taking recourse in the "curriculum" of their traditional socializing institutions, they may sustain a close fit between culture and curriculum. The resulting fit, however, may ultimately prove disastrous in the face of the encroaching alien culture of Portuguese and French speakers. Old fits, good for old times, prove inadequate to meet the challenges of dramatically different times. For better and worse, new languages fit students for the emergent new world in their lives.

In Robert Wellesley Cole's account (1960) of his school days in the Sierra Leone of the early 1920s, we learn of the new becoming salient. He describes the jolt he and his fellow students

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received when the colonial government announced that external examinations for secondary school students would be set in West Africa rather than in the United Kingdom. The government reasoned thus: would not Africans "be better off with local examinations framed to suit 'the realities of local conditions?'" (1960, p. 185)

Cole, his classmates, their families, and the press rallied to resist what Western educated Sierra Leoneans interpreted as an effort by their British rulers to keep them in their place. Cole knew that unless he and his classmates took school-leaving examinations set abroad, they could not attend Oxford or Cambridge and thereby gain access to occupational mobility. What colonial policymakers perceived as a fitting curriculum--of which tests surely are an integral aspect--Sierra Leoneans deemed unfitting and staunchly resisted. Clearly, one person's good fit is another person's crunched opportunities.

What curriculum suits what cultural orientation as seen by whom is the subject of this report. It is a complex topic because the culture of most contemporary nations is a tangled tapestry of subcultural variants. The variants have curricular ramifications. Different groups may agree about what language to conduct instruction in and whose history to teach, and disagree about what other languages to offer and what topics with what emphasis to include in the history course. The translation of some aspect of culture or subculture into its curricular terms is undertaken by persons who often have high stakes in what they support. Indeed, as we see with Chief Poropot and Portuguese, the Diallobe and French, and Sierra Leonean Cole and the setting of external examinations, what is at stake is no less than fundamental well-being and survival as some agent defines them. (I will use agent to designate who, in light of some cultural orientation, proposes or supports some curricular element.)

If the stakes are not always so high, they seldom are trivial because schooling is too intimately tied to perceptions of individual, group, national, and international fortune. And the tie is not confined to colonial or third-world circumstances. We can hear the sounds of urgency in Zuga's characterization of American industrialists--the agents--whose willingness to "cooperate with the schools may be fostered by an underlying desire to control the 'products' of the schools in order to have a better fit between the needs of the labor force and the graduates of educational institutions" (1989, p. 2). Labor force needs are far from trivial. The Business Higher Education Forum, "a group of about 80 corporate chief executives and university presidents" urges a "concerted national effort" to "revitalize American education" so that we can meet "the demands of the global marketplace" (Walsh, 1988, p. 7). What this organization of executives has in mind is distant in cultural and curricular terms from the legislation Governor Thompson of Illinois approved. Illinois now requires all state schools to "determine

a specific curriculum...on the historical significance, as well as the ethical and moral implications, of the Holocaust and other historical incidents of genocide" (Holmes, 1989, pp. 7-8; see also Education Week, October 4, 1989). The advocates of a curriculum suitable for meeting global marketplace demands compete with advocates of a curriculum suitable for comprehending genocide. Survival is at issue in both instances; neither would necessarily concede the priority of the other.

My intent in this report is to discuss the relationship between culture and curriculum within the concept of fit, but first I must explicate all three terms; identify the agents; and, finally, examine the linkage of culture and curriculum.

Culture, Curriculum, and Fit

The concept of culture is having a heyday. The ubiquitous appearance of the term in social science and education literature testifies to its being construed as necessary; in the process, it has become fashionable, as well. Such is the case in the field of educational scholarship, whose writers adopt established definitions of culture and construct definitions of their own. Not with standing that it is overdefined and that if one looks long enough one can find conception to match any purpose, there is reasonable convergence on the referents of culture so that we borrowers need not feel that our choice of definitions is arbitrary.

Some writers prefer to state what culture is not. Metz, for example, writes that culture "is not a systematic set of logically interrelated propositions about values, norms and the nature of the empirical world;" but, she adds at once, it is "a broad, diffuse, and potentially contradictory body of shared understanding about both what is and what ought to be" (1986, p. 54; see also Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone, 1988, p. 5). I value Metz's reference to "what ought to be" because it captures a common aspect of the translation of culture into curriculum: the often imperative tone of the agents' curricular recommendations. This tone is implied in Goodenough's definition that "a society's culture consists of whatever one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members" (quoted in Mehan, 1982, p. 64). When Goodenough speaks of what "one has to know and believe," he points to categories of curricular experience for which agents will have particular recommendations. Cazden and Mehan "think of culture as the normal, expected ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving of large social groups" (1989, p. 49), nations, or communities; they exclude the smaller social groups whose "normal, expected ways" are those of a subculture. For my purposes, both culture and subculture are important for examining the culture-curriculum relationship.

Erickson picks up on the subcultural factor in his view of culture as "learned and shared standards for ways of thinking, feeling, and acting," so that he can identify the problem or misfit in the case of the classroom teachers' "learned ways of thinking and acting that have not yet been learned by their students" (1986, p. 117). An issue in culture-curriculum fit arises from the discrepancies among the involved subcultures, those of teachers and students, in Erickson's example. Based on her research on magnet middle schools, Metz identifies a teacher subculture. It develops by virtue of shared "meaning systems" (see also Maehr, 1987, pp. 295-296), and she usefully adds, "has roots in the larger culture of the society" (1986, p. 221). Given the prospect of a range of subcultural "meaning systems" operating within the shared space of a school, and within the larger society where subcultures abound, we see the occasion for conflict over what curriculum should prevail.

In practice, what strictly speaking are subcultures, writers often refer to as cultures. Thus, Rossman et al. (1988) refer to "teacher culture," Metz (1983) to "home culture," Shakeshaft (1987) to "female culture," and Maehr (1987) to "organizational culture." It is well to bear in mind that subcultures are rooted in the "larger culture of the society" because this suggests the legitimacy of what is an inevitable fact of complex societies: to varying degrees, subcultures are in competition with each other as they try to enact their "meaning systems" in the curricula of their society's schools. It is, therefore, a matter of good guys doing battle with each other as they contend for the right to define what goes on in school.

Considerations of fit--what element of culture goes with what element of curriculum--arise from the concerns of agents of both culture and subculture. In this regard, some curriculum theorists adopt Linton's (1936) tripartite conception of culture. His three components of culture are universals and specialties, which roughly correspond to culture and subculture as noted above, and alternatives, which are departures from ordinary, accepted ways of doing and believing. Smith, Stanley, and Shores (1950) used Linton's conception in their classic Fundamentals of Curriculum Development. This entire book is a study of the culture-curriculum relationship (see also Reynolds and Skilbeck, 1976), about which they have a particular point of view: "...in the core program [which contains the central aspects of culture that Linton calls universals], the social problems criterion...constitutes the primary measure of curriculum content" (1950, p. 743). They state unequivocally that which "comprises the curriculum" of a school invariably derives from its host culture (p. 10). I cannot imagine curriculum in any other sense; indeed, this is the premise of this report. What remains hereafter is to identify what the cultural and subcultural agents (Erickson, 1986; Smith et al., 1950)

believe ought to be (Metz, 1986) in regard to perceiving, thinking, and behaving (Cazden and Mehan, 1989).

Curriculum, like culture, also has a long history of being defined. Its referents can be as broad as the nation's K-12 school system, or as narrow as a particular place, school, grade, or classroom. The planned or formal curriculum is one consideration, and the enacted curriculum, or what teachers actually do in their classrooms, is another. My sense is to stay out of the thicket of existing definitions of curriculum and leave the actual definition, for the purposes of this report, to emerge from the many culture-curriculum examples I will cite. Nonetheless, I find it useful to think of curriculum in the three manifestations--explicit, implicit, and null--that Eisner (1979, pp. 74-92) explores. "Explicit" corresponds to the manifest, formal expression of a curriculum, to what can usually be found in plan books or filed manila folders. "Implicit" corresponds to the latent, informal expression of a curriculum, to what otherwise is known as the hidden curriculum (see Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968; Turner, 1983). Often no less important in its consequences than the explicit curriculum, we can infer the existence of the hidden curriculum from observing the conduct of teachers, students, and administrators, from studying tests and homework assignments, and the like. "Null" refers to what is untaught and thus not learned at school. The null curriculum is untaught because it reflects unvalued or undervalued aspects of culture for which there is an insufficient constituency, for which no agent, or too few, or too ineffectual agents have raised a banner and led a cause.

In any event, it is the relationship between culture and curriculum broadly conceived that is my focus, as when Smith et al. say "The curriculum is always a reflection of what people think, feel, believe, and do" (1950, p. 4), and when Reynolds and Skilbeck present curriculum as "a mediation or a bridge between the learner's experiences and the processes, forms and substances of contemporary culture" (1976, p. 100).

Those curricular specifications that agents endorse are meant to fit their culturally oriented sense of what is good in the curriculum that should be perpetuated, of what is missing and should be included, and of what is included but not in the right degree or right way and should be modified. These generalities get translated into decisions, for example, about what the language of instruction should be; whether and to what extent second languages should be taught; what subjects should be taught and what their relative emphasis and their contents should be; what emphasis should be given to an overall attribute of the school, such as moral instruction, discipline, patriotism, critical thinking, or civic participation in the community; and what should be the nature of and emphasis given to the extracurricular program.

As I discuss below, decisions applicable to curriculum are derived from culturally rooted premises about the nature and/or well-being of children, a particular group, the society, or the world. On behalf of some cultural commitment, someone, an agent, makes a judgment. As determined and absolutist as agents may be, their outlook represents but one point of view. Accordingly, we must consider that any particular curricular rendering drawn from any particular cultural premise is but one of several judgments that could be made. Recall the case of Cole (1960) and the setting of external examinations in early 20th-century Sierra Leone: What was fitting to colonial masters was not to colonized students and parents. And both perspectives would likely have been rejected by local orthodox religious leaders to whom the Western-type education favored by students and colonialists was an anathema in any form. Battiste makes clear that it makes a difference who decides what is fit when he calls literacy developed from within a group "cultural transmission" and literacy developed from outside the group "cultural imperialism" (1984, p. 3). From the agent's perspective, however, the judgment of fittingness is invariably positive.

The judgment of fittingness represents a point of view that something for some purpose is suitable or appropriate; seemly, proper, or prudent; ready or prepared; or healthy. One's socks or gloves can fit, but not perfectly. When a fit is less than perfect, there are costs and benefits to examine. Socks and gloves can serve their intended purposes, even if the fit is poor; the results may be uncomfortable but not disastrous. In the case of medication and sickness or curriculum and culture, a poor fit can be costly.

What we have seen so far about the concept of fit is that it always represents someone's point of view, and that it is a normative, relational term. Moreover, in modern nations the judgment of fittingness between culture and curriculum is inordinately complex because there is no clear relationship between what is valued and therefore worthy of perpetuation, and what is done in schools in the name of perpetuation. Like the economist's basic problem of infinite wants but with finite resources to satisfy them, societies have a plethora of cultural claims that seek curricular representation. These claims not only resist translation into a single curricular form about which there is certain consensus, let alone unanimity, they also compete for a school's limited curricular space. Numerous cultural agents, as I discuss in the next section, are intent on adding to what already exists.

Agent of Fit

Many agents are in the academic world, usually in the professional ranks of higher education. James Lynch, Dean of the Faculty of Education at Sunderland Polytechnic in England, is an

example. His books (1986, 1987) and talks (1988) are forums for his advocacy of multicultural education. Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976) identify teachers and students as agents. Peterson (1988) alerts us to the role of principals as "culture builders" who foster the development of norms, values, and beliefs"--the very stuff of culture. Peterson's referent point is the school's organization, but it seems that it could as well be the school's curriculum. He cites Schein (1985) to clarify that principals shape culture--and curriculum, as well--by what they pay attention to, measure, and control; by how they react to critical incidents; by their modeling, teaching, and coaching behavior; by their allocation of rewards and status; and by the criteria they use for selection and promotion of personnel (Peterson, 1988, p. 254). This set of behaviors characterizes the conduct not only of principals but also of several types of individuals (superintendents of schools and other administrators) and groups (foundations and federal agencies, for example) as they play the role of agent.

It does not take much reflection to compose a list of agents. They abound in the United States where legitimate agents are not confined to professionals in universities and centralized bureaucracies (e.g., ministries of education). Indeed, the more complex and open a society, and the stronger its tradition of local control of education, the more they abound. As a high school teacher, I got my share of materials from patriotic organizations--the American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution, from business organizations--the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, from labor unions--the AFL-CIO, and from manufacturing companies which sent free "instructional" materials. Whether the organizations sponsored an essay contest, distributed materials, or sent out speakers, they had a cultural ax to grind: a way of seeing the citizen's response to country, the voter's selection of candidates, or the worker's relationship to production. In short, the organizations had ideas embodying values they deemed worthy of dissemination.

Following World War II, when the federal government found warrant to amplify its role in education, federal agents joined an already existing large crowd of professional associations--the National Education Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals; foundations--Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller; regional accrediting bodies; textbook publishers; and a multitude of special interest groups that identified a stake in education with curricular ramifications.

A limited but important group of federal government programs was the subject of a volume edited by Campbell and Bunnell (1963). They included chapters on the National Science Foundation (Mendelson, 1963), whose expenditures on education rose in the period 1952-

1962 from 1.5 to 84.5 million dollars; the National Defense Education Act (Kratzman, 1963), whose spending in the period 1959-1962 rose form 115.3 to 211.6 million dollars; and the National Merit Scholarship Program (La Vigue, 1963), whose participants in the period 1956-1961 rose from 58,158 to 586,813. In curricular terms, these several projects signified emphasis on certain students--the college-bound gifted, and on certain subjects--mathematics, science, and foreign languages. They exemplified the federal government's involvement as an active agent in school affairs, and disposed educators to expect that federal funds would be available to facilitate their response to societal pressures for change.

More so than anywhere else in the world, nonfederal and nonstate levels of government in the United States have significant prerogatives for controlling the operation--administratively and instructionally--of schools. These prerogatives are exemplified by the right of communities to select their administrators and teachers and to purchase their instructional materials in the absence (notwithstanding ACT and SAT test) of an externally composed, nationally certified school-leaving examination. Which is to say that within local communities, there are several types of agents--from parents, parent organizations, and school boards, to administrators, teachers, and counselors. But this is not news. What is news is the undermining of these prerogatives by the increasing role of state and federal agents. In 1947, public schools received 58.9 percent of their financial support from local sources, 39.8 percent from the state, and 1.3 percent from the federal government (Wahlquist, Arnold, Campbell, Reller, & Sands, 1952, p. 33). By 1986-1987, the local contribution had declined to 43.7 percent, eclipsed by the state's 49.6 percent and the federal government's 6.4 percent; these are averages which belie much variability. For example, the state's share is 5.9 percent in New Hampshire and 75.1 percent in New Mexico (Education Week,, 1989, p. 3). In his study of school control, Kirst found that state governments believed local governments did not pay sufficient attention to "curriculum quality, teacher evaluation, and academic standards" to be able "to compete in a world economy" (1988, pp. 7, 14). Consequently, contrary to past recommendations for decentralized control (see Levin, 1972; Fein, 1971) and the current decentralizing efforts in Chicago (Designs for Change, 1989), we are more likely to read about state initiatives in education. New York's Commissioner of Education, for example, proposes that "the state would set 'standards of excellence' that all schools could aspire to as well as minimum standards that could trigger state intervention" (Jennings, 1988, p. 12).

My intent here is to produce neither a systematic picture nor a history of the expanding efforts of the federal government (see Harvard Educational Review, 1984 and Harvard Educational Review's 1982 special issue on "Rethinking the Federal Role in Education") or the continuing

efforts of professional organizations, foundations, and private interest groups. The results of these several efforts produced an avalanche of words. Indeed, the year 1983 spawned a banner crop of words, as the Carnegie Foundation addressed the American high school (Boyer, 1983); the U.S. Department of Education alerted us to reform so badly needed that we had become A Nation at Risk (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983); the National Science Foundation looked, as reform-oriented reports often do, to the next century, focusing on mathematics, science, and technology (National Science Board, 1983); and the Education Commission of the States highlighted excellence, a soon-to-be overused word as educators and politicians debated and brooded over school improvement (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983).

That these same agents and others continue to reflect on the situation of society and schooling comes as no surprise. In one issue of Education Week (November 2, 1988, p. 10) readers got a page full of national organizations which sought a re-forming of the fit between culture and the curriculum of some level of schooling, a re-forming that incorporated the organization's particular cultural propensities. Several of them were associated with a certain founder--John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal and Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. Others were the work of the rival teacher unions--the American Federation of Teachers' Center for Restructuring and the National Education Association's Mastery in Learning Project and Learning Laboratory Districts. Other groups in the Education Week review suggest the range of agent-groups at work: the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Consortium on Restructuring, the Holmes Group's Work on Tomorrow's Schools, the National Association of State Boards' of Education school improvement projects in New Mexico and Washington, and the National Governors' Association's Restructuring Schools Project.

Any list of agents also must include the Supreme Court and its decisions; the impact of national test programs such as the Educational Testing Service's Scholastic Aptitude Test; the work of the various parent groups, notably the National Parent Teacher Association; the data collected by groups such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress; research conducted by groups such as the Rand Corporation; and the consequences of collaboration between a school district and some academic to create schools that incorporate a certain concept. An example is the new magnet school in Indianapolis based on the writing of psychologist Howard Gardner (Teacher, 1989, pp. 60-61).

We get an idea of a comparable list of agents operating in England from Ball's historical treatment of English in the school curriculum:

> The arenas in which English as a school subject was established--the Board of Education, the English Association conferences, the Newbolt Committee--and the interest groups involved--the universities and public schools, politicians and educational civil servants, and eminent writers and educationalists--clearly define curriculum change in terms of the influence and decision-making and conflicts of interests among a number of overlapping educational elites (1983, p. 84).

Ball's colleagues, Bowe and Whitty, write in the same volume about the need to develop an agent, where now there is none, to express a preferred type of curricular response. Finding in their study of school-leaving examinations that capitalist forces had this important aspect of education to themselves (p. 245), they urged "the Left to develop a position on curriculum and examinations as part of the broader political strategy of the labor movement" (p. 246). Bowe and Whitty identify a national political entity--a political party--as the agent. Indeed, where education is centrally controlled, political parties may be crucial agents. Given the diffuse structures of control in American education, however, the educational platform of our political parties is of much less consequence.

The number and diversity of interests of American agents set the stage for the broad-scale politics of the culture-curriculum fit. Thus, in addition to the direct politics of local school board elections, where the attention is on one particular school district, the politics of the many interested agents may well affect a particular school district but operate on state, regional, or national levels. The local district's school-board guardians contend with competing pressures from numerous other agents.

Having discussed the three concepts of culture, curriculum, and fit, and the variety of agents who advocate a particular relationship among the three, I turn next to illustrations of this relationship drawn from a review of contemporary literature.

The Culture-Curriculum Relationship

In this section, I will suggest the varied ways that agents seek to have some aspect of culture become manifest in school activity. I consider agents as representatives of a subculture, with subculture conceived loosely as one of the numerous alternative expressions of cultural behavior that contemporary nations harbor. The previous section on agents of fit demonstrated the breadth of this group. In this section, we will see the different ways they connect some aspect of culture and its curricular representation or means. The agents often appear as advocates of change. They perceive curriculum as the means to change some aspect of society. The particular change they advocate derives from their cultural orientation. Drawing upon this

orientation, they frame a purpose or rationale for what they hope to achieve through schooling. In some of the following examples (see Kickbusch & Everhart [1985] below), however, no agent is present and no change is suggested; the authors depict a status quo which I presume to be the outcome of earlier work by some agent who established a culture-curriculum fit.

The many examples I cite below to explore the association of culture, curriculum, and fit contain, implicitly or explicitly, an if-then type of reasoning. If an agent desires that some state of affairs be introduced, improved or sustained--the "if" term is drawn from the agent's cultural orientation--then the schools should do something--the "then" term is drawn from the agent's perception of curriculum. Thus Bennett opens her study with this statement (which has the form more of a rationale than a purpose): "Given that we live in a multicultural society and a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent, multicultural education is an imperative" (1988, p. 2). As Bennett reasons, if this type of society and world, then that type of schooling. She sees the success of her recommended curriculum in the capacity of teachers to "select texts and resource materials that present authentic images of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic groups" (1988, p.2). From an array of possible characterizations of the world and American society, Bennett chose interdependent and multicultural, respectively. These are the cultural facts of consequence to her. Her choice of curriculum activity is meant to fit these facts.

As the forthcoming cases will clarify, there are many different bases that agents can draw upon in addition to the world and American society. In one set, macrolevel in nature, the agents refer to culture, community, society, marketplace, or the world. In another set, microlevel in nature, agents refer to one or several attributes either of a group or subculture, or of individuals. The former (not meant to be exhaustive) includes language, interaction style, cognitive style, interests and values, situational conditions, and ethnicity in general. The latter includes socioeconomic status (SES), gender, and intellectual ability, effort, or achievement. What cultural meaning and, therefore, what curricular consequences these attributes have is a matter of interpretation.

Before continuing with further examples, I will bring together the several new concepts from this section and relate them to culture, curriculum, agent, and fit--the concepts discussed in previous sections. We have seen that culture is "understanding about both what is and ought to be" (Metz, 1986, p. 54); what "one has to know and believe" (Goodenough, quoted in Mehan, 1982, p. 64); the "expected ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving" (Cazden & Mehan, 1989, p. 49); and "ways of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Erickson, 1986, p. 117). When I refer to an agent's cultural orientation, I have in mind these several characterizations of culture. The individuals, organizations, and groups I call agents act in behalf of cultures or

subcultures to tie all or some manifestation of culture to curriculum. Their intention is to insure a fit at some point between curriculum and culture.

Agents may take large units as their charge, referring to an entire culture, society, or the world, as does Bennett in the above example. Bennett takes as the basis for her agency what she perceives as salient about American society--it is multicultural, and about the world--it is interdependent. Out of the numerous possible focal points of culture, Bennett, imbedded in particular cultural and subcultural alternatives, gives voice to two expressions. The number of such expressions is unlimited. Bennett would not soon exhaust what she could say about American society and the world. Of the many possibilities she could identify, she chose two. They came not from out of the blue but, rather, from the complex of her personal cultural and subcultural orientations. They represent the cause she wants served by some aspect of curriculum; they are the warrant for the curricular means she endorses. Bennett did not focus on health, unemployment, or pollution. Had she done so, she would have tendered other bases for thinking about schools, offered warrant for endorsing other aspects of curriculum to fit other aspects of culture.

As I have discussed them, agents appear as conscious activists. This image misrepresents a whole set of agents--teachers, students, and parents, for example--whose behavior "makes" curriculum out of some cultural orientation but not necessarily in a conscious way or with specified, articulated bases in mind. Their agency is performed in the normal course of playing their role as teacher, student, or parent, although each may join groups and organizations that have been formed to give them voice. Examples below that relate to resistance illustrate this point. When, say, students and parents resist what happens in school, their actions contribute to the null curriculum. They become agents for undoing some aspect of curriculum, such as tests--they should be fewer and easier; homework--there should be less of it; books--which ones are acceptable to read; and sex education--an unsuitable subject for classroom instruction.

Macrolevel Referents for Curriculum

A notably general premise, its breadth at once making it incontestable and not particularly useful, is that schools should transmit the culture of their society. Of course it should! This functionalist orientation (Reynolds & Skilbeck, 1976, p. 32) can be expressed as schools should "prepare the young to take their place in the society of adults" (Kimball, 1974, p. 257). Observers are rarely content to leave matters stand at this global level, though where they go thereafter is highly variable.

Kimball (1974) looks at the social and cultural interests of the community in which a school is located. When a school draws upon these interests, for example, in shaping its extracurricular activities, it prepares students to participate in the social life of their community. Less personal than the community as a premise, is the marketplace, a starting point of substantial weight for many agents. When Sewall (1983) takes career education and work study programs to task, his grounds are their failure to teach "industry and discipline" or to raise the "status of manual labor" (pp. 156-157). In what amounts to a combination of community and marketplace, Labaree (1988) describes Central High School in Philadelphia, a select public institution which for years admitted male students and only by examination. The result was a special group of students drawn largely from the self-employed middle class. When political pressure forced the school to admit more students, the school introduced a track (actually a sidetrack) system for the newcomers so it could be free to continue its special curriculum. The latter changed over the years in response to available job opportunities, but the changes also were in response to pressure from adult constituents that the school provide an exclusive "cultural property," (passion), a moral education, a sense of a "republican community" (p. 5), at one time, and a special economic credential, at another.

Writing in the spirit of the critical theorists, LaBelle observes the painful dilemma of nations with a dominant group and several large minority groups. Minority groups are subjected by the controlling force of the majority. LaBelle translates this dilemma into educational terms by arguing for a curriculum "that would naturally and effectively represent the ethnic-cultural identity of its subgroups while simultaneously deriving its legitimacy from a reflection of the needs and interests of the total population" (1979, p. 51). This deceptively simple, straightforward premise attracts attention from writer-agents who focus on the pluralist nature of societies throughout the world. Their protective instincts seek justice for subordinated cultural subgroups in danger of being overwhelmed. They often advocate some version of a multicultural curriculum. In this vein, Walking (1980) wants a "transformationist" curriculum which by its recognition of "the worthwhile features of any way of life" (p. 94), would be appropriate for a multicultural society. He explicates his premise thus: A multicultural society must provide "a dynamic context [read "curriculum"] in which people's beliefs are exchanged, defended, argued about, converted, retained, assessed, ignored ostentatiously, and so on: all the reactions people have to the beliefs of other people whom they take seriously." (p. 94).

With Walking's concept of "transformation" we learn of another general function of schooling, the first type being transmissionist whereby the charge of schools is perceived as passing on something. Transformationists such as Walking want to transform the learner's consciousness

in schools that have assumed the role of social critic and cultural synthesizer (p. 90). Those who, like Kimball (1974), write about transmission also realize that the pace of change in all nations necessitates curricular attunement to avoid the obsolete, the impractical, and the useless, while favoring knowledge and behavior that is up-to-date. Indeed, it is inconceivable that agents could hold an exclusively transmissionist conception; somewhere, somehow, they have transformationist views. They differ in regard to their conceptions of the rationale, substance, and instructional means to realize their preferred transformation.

Perhaps the most determined transformationists are the critical theorists. In my terms, they pass muster as agents. They oppose the perpetuation of inequality by the schools of capitalist societies. They focus directly on culture and curriculum in their explanations of the relationship between the material conditions of a society and the nature and impact of its schools (see, among others, Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977; Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1981, and Everhart, 1983). In their view, schools reproduce the inequalities inherent in social class distinctions. Accordingly, cultural transmission is the process of reproducing the ideologies, forms of knowledge, and skills that currently are the basis of and perpetuate class distinctions (Giroux, 1983).

Critical theorists reject the status quo in the schools they study, often leaving implicit just what type of schools and curriculum could feasibly replace those they reject. To be sure, Giroux (1983) applauds the "resistance" to the ruling class's structures he and others see (Anyon, 1979 and 1980, e.g., and many writers published in the Journal of Education). By their resistance, teachers, parents, and students mitigate and manage the adversity of the status quo. The often determined, but far from organized, efforts of students enhance their personal comfort and control in school. Their behavior can affect the pace, cognitive level, and volume of classwork; they also introduce classroom activities that are nonacademic and represent values they esteem. In examples from the United Kingdom, Willis refers to the use of "ignorance" as "a barrier to control" (1977, p. 192), Measor to "strategies to maintain a balance between the formal and informal pleasures and pressures of school" (1984, p. 211), and Player to students whose "couldn't care less attitude" was a "stylized form of resistance to alien cultural values" (1984, p. 222). In an example from the United States, Smith and Andrew refer to the strong antagonism nonstriving black students direct to modifying the behavior of striving black students by saying: "If you get good grades, the other kids'll just kill you" (1988, p. 26).

Kickbusch and Everhart explore two classrooms in a suburban American high school. They discuss how a "humanistic classroom" and teachers with a "critical perspective" (1985, p. 313) can mitigate the impact of inequality in these classrooms. The commentaries and insights of

critical theorists do not amount to a curricular conception for schools that would replace the curriculum which nationwide reflects the dominant modes of production. Kickbusch and Everhart's notion seems to be of the sort that says, "Here's what to do until the revolution comes," as does Lather's (1986) empowering, emancipatory conception of research, Giroux' (1983) resistance, and Carlson's (1987) activist role for teachers. These and other critical theorists do not typically address the matter of revolution, curricular or otherwise. Their analyses and prescriptions have an in-the-meantime aspect to them, reflecting their antagonism to capitalism and its injustices, and their personal and professional embeddedness in the institutions they professedly abhor.

Broudy (1986), in the course of making a case for the high school's primary emphasis on general education, identifies four uses of schooling--associative, replicative (the most common usage), interpretive, and applicative. Broudy argues for interpretive and applicative uses because they provide students with the means to live as adults in a complex, changing society. Though Broudy does not use the term "liberatory" to characterize his recommended uses of the school, his emphasis on knowledge and skills congruent with interpretation and application would, in fact, be liberatory, though not as Paulo Freire (1985) imagines it. Freire's hope for the education of the dispossessed peasants of his Brazilian homeland is that learners would become so conscious of the conditions that stifle their lives that they are motivated and enabled to alter them.

The particulars of transformation are not left to chance. Tranformationists, accordingly, may be explicit about the nature of the future to which liberation is to be tied, or about the process for getting there. Beyer's writing is an example of the latter. Appalled by groups which reduce education to "private gain and an accountant's profit/loss sheet for public good" (1988, p. 3), he urges a restructuring of American schools so they can foster "participatory democracy." He is specific not about a product called "participatory democracy" but about a curricular process that will lead to such a society. His curriculum would encourage the exploration of controversial issues and alternative explanations for important events, as well as develop an appreciation of divergent opinions (1988, p. 323). Musgrove, reflecting what he sees as the conditions of his United Kingdom homeland, also emphasizes process. He visualizes a "third cultural" reality, arguing that there is need "not to preserve or transmit particular cultures but to transcend them; and the curriculum of any school in a multicultural society will be rooted in the unending dialectic of integration-pluralism" (1982, p. 183).

In their focus on teacher education, Giroux and McLaren highlight their commitment to the "critical democratic tradition." They seek teachers prepared "for the role of transformative

intellectual," teachers who can rethink "the relationship of schooling to the social order" (1986, pp. 237-238). Finally, in this set of process-oriented premises, Cazden and Mehan consider as fact that, given the demography of American society, "teachers and students will not share cultural and social experiences" (1989, p. 47). Therefore, they advise, teachers must "learn how to learn about students and their families," not as "solution" but as "general procedure" (1989, p. 55). The result, presumably, is an emergent curriculum and an emergent society.

Strongly contrasting with the process orientation of Beyer, Musgrove, and others is the ideologically specific future of fundamentalist Christians. Christian education leaders establish schools with a scriptural foundation (Peshkin, 1986); they aspire to a society with the same foundation. In their schools, children acquire principles to direct what they should think and how they should act in the humanist world they condemn. Christian day school students learn about patriotism, the military, foreign policy, capitalism, and candidates for elected offices--all in the spirit of the sponsoring church's conservative doctrine. Fundamentalist Christians are apt to be transformationists with a vengeance, in strong contrast with the Amish and other small, insular groups (Hostetler, 1971). The latter seek schools with a definite ideological thrust, but since they do not proselytize, they are content to perpetuate their own subgroup and leave the larger society to go its own way.

A final macrolevel premise is located in the transnational arena of global economies or multinational politics. The National Governors' Association (NGA), reflecting the contemporary phenomenon of high-level elected officials making their mark as education governor or president, issued a report calling for a curriculum with "foreign languages, international history, geography, and foreign cultures" (Flax, 1989, p. 11). Their rationale, says NGA chairman Governor Bailes of Virginia, is the preparation of students able to do business "anywhere on earth" (Flax, 1989, p. 11); see also Schmidt, 1989). Sicinski (1985), similarly transnational but substantively divergent from the NGA, finds his curricular rationale in a "global village" where people need a solidarity as broad as humanity. His concern underscores interdependence and the necessity of mutual understanding; his issues are the need to live well together, not to compete effectively.

Microlevel Referents for Curriculum

Kickbusch and Everhart (1985) studied high school classrooms. They labeled students "conformists" or "nonconformists," which I take as designations of subcultures. Since the conformists saw their school experience as applicable to the valued outcomes of higher education and good jobs, they "affirmed the legitimacy of the dominant curriculum" (p. 309) by

their regular attendance, completion of assignments, and participation in class discussions. The curriculum they endorsed offered "formal, academic learning." Conformists affirmed their school experience because it fit them. As the children of college graduates, they were pleased with a school that was instrumental to their status maintenance. Kickbusch and Everhart do not identify an agent as such; I should think, however, they would attribute the prevalence of schools that conformists favor to the capitalist social structure that induces particular forms of reproduction (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976).

The fit between a curriculum, indeed an entire school, and a particular subculture is evident in a range of cases. Hart (1963) focuses on education in "primitive" societies where the curriculum in postpubertal initiation schools is precisely shaped to mold youth into fully fitting members of society. Interestingly, the schools emphasize proper belief and conduct, not how to make a living. The curriculum of the school rests on the undisputed cultural heritage of the tribe. If the ideological foundations of a group are undisputed, the curriculum of its schools is not subject to controversy. Such is the case in Amish and Hutterite communities as regards the conduct of informal education (Hostetler, 1987). Their children often attend state schools with a standard public school curriculum. Under such circumstances, the Hutterites strive to control the teachers with lectures, admonitions, gifts, and the insistence that the schools contain no radios, films, or record player. "The English school [the public school taught in English] is encapsulated by the colony pattern, and ideally its influence cannot go beyond the bounds set by its culture" (Hostetler, 1987, p. 132).

In a manner of speaking, Hutterite children already are encapsulated when they enter public school because of their home socialization and because they have attended a kindergarten whose medium of instruction is German, the language of the Hutterites, and that teaches them how to live in Hutterite terms. In contrast, the public school is conducted in English and teaches worldly facts. Valuing both orientations, the Hutterites endorse a form of biculturalism. They strive to maintain their subculture to a degree greater than do most minority subgroups other than the wealthy, whose cultural maintenance is served by carefully selected elite institutions, from nursery through university schooling.

Unlike the Hutterites and the wealthy, who, where they are the majority, can control their children's schools, other subgroups with a strong ideological focus do not successfully encapsulate the schools their children attend. The fundamentalist Christians in Kanawha County, West Virginia, are such a group. Since they did not control the school district their children attended, the district purchased books which they found objectionable. The new readers, they claimed, undermined their basic cultural values (see Hillocks, 1978; Kincheloe,

1983). What previously had been a fitting place for the education of their children, they condemned as unfitting when the new books entered the curriculum. With their sense of cultural fit violated, they resorted to violence. A group's inability to encapsulate and control a public school often inspires the establishment of private schools based on their particular ideological beliefs. Racial avoidance notwithstanding, many fundamentalist Christian schools arose from the wishes of parents and pastors to fashion schools containing teachers and instructional materials at the service of scripture (see Peshkin, 1986; Parsons, 1987).

In public school districts where the host community is generally homogeneous, as it tends to be in nonpublic schools, local control enables the development of schools quite fully reflective of prevailing values, beliefs, and behaviors. Teachers and administrators are selected by a school board which acts as the guardian agent of a close school-community fit (Peshkin, 1978, pp. 58-99). Supreme Court rulings which forbade religious expression in public schools can be viewed as the work of one agent countermanding the preferences of another, notably the school boards in these homogeneous communities which traditionally enjoyed, for example, daily prayer and the celebration of Christmas.

Judgments about the salubriousness of the close fit in private Christian schools and public rural schools reveal the uncertainty of outsiders about these schools. In the case of Christian schools, fundamentalist Christians enjoy and support the close fit; many non-fundamentalist Christians see the fit as misguided and excessive; while still others, of many different religious persuasions, fear the divisiveness they imagine such schools engender (Peshkin, 1986). In the case of rural schools, insiders see the close fit as comfortable and comforting, while outsiders see their comparatively constricted academic opportunities as limiting the life chances of their graduates (Peshkin, 1978).

Language, as I referred to above in the cases of the Kaiapo (Simons, 1989) and the Diallobe (Kane, 1972), becomes a matter of special consideration when the language of instruction differs from that which students learn at home and come to school speaking. Leaders of both the Kaiapo and the Diallobe advocate learning the foreign language which is the lingua franca of the schools their children would attend. They see mastery of a particular foreign language as instrumental to economic, if not political, opportunity. Or, put another way, the warrant for instruction in a particular language is an agent's interest in economic and political opportunity.

The language component of curriculum incites strong emotional responses because it draws upon cultural values relating to patriotism, citizenship, and group (tribe, nation, region, or state) perpetuation (see Sayigh, 1968; Friedrich, 1968). As a sine qua non participation in their

new social group, immigrant children turn readily to learning the new language and, in the process, may never master the language of most comfort to their parents and family elders. Judgments about the culture-curriculum fit for linguistic minorities may be clear cut to some observers. Rodriguez (1981), for example, endorses learning the public language over the private or home language of the student. Depending on the political context, judgments about language are a matter of considerable controversy to others. In the contemporary Soviet Union, the revitalization of local nationalism engenders issues relating to the relative place of Russian and the languages of the non-Russian nationalities (Kramer, 1990). Among other things, Russian is a robust means of social control in the Soviet Union; as such, it bears the stigma of its uninvited supremacy.

In a similar vein, Battiste identifies literacy as a factor in unwanted cultural assimilation, making his point from a study of the Micmac Indians of Northeastern Canada. Powerful colonial and national governments, as well as influential missionaries, have used the acquisition of literacy as a means to impose values of special interest to themselves. Battiste (1984), like the chiefs of the Kaiapo and the Diallobe, says literacy is indispensable for "underdeveloped" or "primitive" peoples to cope in today's world (p. 4), but he wants a respectful literacy of the type advocated for bilingual-bicultural education (p. 21). Literacy that is typically unfitting and thus "cultural imperialism" is, however, fitting in government and missionary terms.

When the school is an important extension of the familiarities of home, as in the case of Kickbusch and Everhart's (1985) conformists, an ease exists between teachers and students in the many interactions that characterize their instructional relationship. Conversely, when the familiarity--and, thus, the ease--is not a given, then dysfunctions follow. At issue here is not, as above, the language of instruction or what is taught but the nature of student-teacher and student-student interaction. Bowles (1972b) applauds the success of post-revolutionary Cuban education for establishing cooperative relations among students and democratic relations between students and teachers in keeping with the socialist orientation of Cuban society. A world away in the South Pacific, Howard studied a group called the Rotuman and also found grounds for applause. Rotuman teachers "adapted the school to their [students'] community" in regard to "cooperation and competition, to various forms of punishment and reward, and to different teaching rhythms" (1970, p. 63). They do this notwithstanding that the purpose of education in Rotuma is to make people competent in the modern, urbanized world. This world, however, is remote from prevailing Rotuman tradition. Similar adaptations are reported by Dumont (1969) on the Cherokee, Erickson (1986) on Native Americans in Alaska

(Barnhart, 1982) and native Hawaiians in Hawaii (Au and Jordan, 1980; Au and Mason, 1981), and Dillon (1990) on black Americans.

In the aforementioned cases, there are agents, most usually educators, who have responsibility for the instruction of children whose lives are rooted in a culture different from that of the teachers and the curriculum. The agents urge a curricular adaptation by teachers based on students' accustomed, out-of-school modes of interaction so that instruction can be effective. The warrant for this recommendation is pedagogical (see Epstein, 1988) and personal well-being; ultimately, it is political and economic success. Should the adaptation be unsuccessful, incomplete, or untried, student resistance (see Erickson, 1986; Wolcott, 1982) can forcibly remind teachers of the gulf between them. In a recent study (Peshkin, in press), a student conveyed his and his fellows' efforts to bring their teacher into line in interactional terms:

> In this one class, Mrs. Rolland, she walked in the first day and there she is. "My name is Mrs. Rolland." I'm this way, I'm that way. I don't do this, I don't do that, I don't take this. That lasted for about a week. We changed her. Where she was Adolf Hitler at the beginning, we turned her into something totally different. We became her friends, is what I feel. She wasn't trying to dominate us anymore. She was trying to be a part of us, is what I feel. She had to get used to us; we're kinda different.

Wolcott's (1982) Kwakiutl students were considerably less gentle with him than were Mrs. Rolland's, a measure, perhaps, of how culturally alien his American ways appeared to them.

At the high school level, an issue is played out in the tension and controversy between teachers of so-called academic and vocational subjects, with ramifications for the distribution of curricular time and resources (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988). Within the academic arena, controversy exists between teachers who see their subject matter as an invitation for intellectual engagement and teachers who see it as an opportunity for developing "appropriate behavior" (Rossman, et al., 1988). Clearly, the issue here relates to the instrumental outcomes of schooling. A related issue is what knowledge is of most worth. The answer may lie in teachers' conceptions of the meaning of their subject. From his study of three high-school, American-history teachers, Evans (1988) observed the influence of their conceptions of history on their selection of content. One teacher saw history as a "moral crusade," a second saw it as a means to develop cosmic awareness, and a third saw it as necessary background for educated citizens. Their common focus on some type of citizenship belies the curricular variations that follow from each teacher's cultural starting point.

The worth of a subject may be plainly conveyed when we see its location on timetables (mornings are reserved for worthier subjects) and the time per week allotted to different subjects, and it is also revealed by what we see designated as "examinable knowledge." To geographers in the United Kingdom, environmental studies did not prove to be sufficiently worthy as an A-level subject. They considered such studies to be watered-down knowledge (Goodson, 1984, p. 35). Also in the United Kingdom, Measor (1984) found students' attentiveness remarkably different in English and mathematics, which students judged as necessary, compared to music, which they judged as not (pp. 202-205).

Shortly before Secretary of Education William Bennett left office in 1988, he issued a list of books as part of his model K-8 curriculum. The books, of course, are "classics"--Great Expectations, Ivanhoe, The House of the Seven Gables, and many more. "Classic" is the imprimatur of time-tested literary worthiness. Susan Ohanian (1988) rejects Bennett's choices. Reflecting her experience with minority children, she argues for Nigger, Autobiography of Malcolm X, and Manchild in the Promised Land. They connect with the life of children, says Ohanian, in ways that Ivanhoe never could. Ohanian's preferred books could facilitate "understanding...how power, resistance, and human agency can become central elements in the struggle for critical thinking and learning" (Giroux, 1983, p. 293). Bennett and Ohanian, as agents, share an interest in what children read. Their disparate choices reveal the gulf between their views of what use literature should have in the life of its readers, if not how schools should function in the life of their students.

Varied cognitive bases selected from an infinite range of cultural possibilities lead to varied curricular circumstances. On the one hand, Heath (1982) demonstrates that black children may not answer teacher questions because they are set in unaccustomed forms which permit one-word answers, whereas the children come to school having learned to see and answer questions about things in context. On the other, Zec, in his examination of multicultural education, urges educators not to build their curriculum on the basis of what "belongs to a minority culture" but, rather, on the basis of universal criteria of rationality (1980, p. 83). His hope is to avoid the hazards of relativism which can result from focusing on the particularities of subcultures.

That children arrive at school having learned ways of thinking about and perceiving matters that the school also deals with is the point of Erickson's (1980) conceptualization of the relationship between culture and science education. Hewson and Hamlyn (1985) exemplify Erickson's point in their study of an African group, the Sotho, and how they use heat

metaphors. Bishop (1988) extends the case to mathematics, claiming, in addition to our customarily sweeping view of its universality, that it also is a culture-specific phenomenon. For more examples relating to mathematics, see the symposium papers organized by Lave (1985, pp. 171-213). And for the home culture-school culture point in general, see the work of Jordan (1985) and her associates in Hawaii.

In Jordan's applied anthropological project, her goal is the development of "a culturally compatible program" between home and school, rather than one that is "culturally isomorphic" or "culturally specific" (1985, p. 117). Efforts to develop culturally compatible programs can flounder when relevant actors in the shaping of curriculum disagree on fundamental matters. This is Erting's (1985) observation after studying deaf students. Teachers and parents of deaf children disagreed on the nature and function of communication and language. Both parents and teachers endorsed a child's fullest participation in society, but by not sharing perceptions of how a successful deaf person behaves in society, they also failed to share understandings about curriculum.

The warrant or purpose of the type of fit Erickson, Jordan, and others discuss is pedagogical, in that they want children who typically have been failures in school to be successes. Though not invariably mentioned, making-it in the majority culture is an implied if not explicit interest (Harrison, 1986). The pedagogical opportunities that culturally compatible programs enable is not meant merely for the students' cultural comfort. Under societal circumstances--such as those of the Australian Aborigines--which threaten a group's integrity, the warrant may be cultural maintenance. Liberman describes such a school in Western Australia. The premise of the school is that since all Aborigines are not and will not be city dwellers, the school's curriculum and teaching should be "consistent with the Aboriginal traditions of the community" (1981, p. 141). Aboriginal elders, as Liberman writes, vigilantly eliminate all that is European, but they overlook the most critical European curricular element in the school--its English literacy class. However much indigenous culture shapes classroom texts and discussion, acquiring English proficiency is a powerfully countervailing force to the school's otherwise highly adapted curriculum.

Filipino parents living in Milwaukee recognize the importance of English-language competence. Lacking the Aborigine's sense of threat from the dominant culture, Filipino parents, according to Ammann (1983), enthusiastically promote their children's English-language skills. To be sure, they do not want to abandon all Filipino ways, but they view acquiring American ways as congruent with their sense of identity. Accordingly, they desire

and seek no curricular adaptations. The most compatible curriculum for their children is the one available to children of successful white parents.

The matter of curricular compatibility is not confined to situations involving overtly different subgroups, for example, Aborigines in Australia or Filipino newcomers in Milwaukee. We see the concerns of groups for compatibility in the many Supreme Court cases that grow out of accusations of censorship (Flygare, 1982; Time, August 23, 1982; Kemerer & Hirsh, 1982). The incident (Hillocks, 1978) created by the reaction of fundamentalist Christians to new textbooks in Kanawha County, West Virginia, reveals the extent to which people will go to insure compatibility. Censorship epitomizes the extreme to which groups will go to correct curricular circumstances they judge to be untenable.

Censorship (see Kemerer & Hirsh, 1982; Jenkinson, 1979) shapes a curriculum by dictating what should be excluded. The agents of censorship--community groups acting on their own or through their school board members--are the agents for suppressing certain books and certain teacher classroom conduct they deem unfitting. The issue for educators, as Beezer (1982) frames it, is the extent of teacher authority. The issue otherwise stated is the intent of some subset of noneducators to shape curriculum for the purpose of maintaining ideological purity, personal well-being, or a sense of order or decorum. Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone are explicit on this point: "When the schools are no longer attuned to local culture, parents and other residents apply pressure to bring them back in line with local expectations" (1988, p. 96). Judging from the substantial increase in censorship attempts (Margolis, 1989), individuals and groups (Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, and Christians for Excellence in Education) perceive much that is "out of line."

At different times in our national and educational history, race and ethnicity have been advanced as the basis for curriculum development. For a time in the 1960s and 1970s, many individuals and groups argued for the necessity of black or Hispanic studies (see National Council for the Social Sciences, 1976; Leslie and Bigelow, 1970; Mackey, 1970; Wagner, 1972), the purpose varying from ethnic pride to national well-being: "the Black experience is more than just an important aspect of American life: It is in fact central to understanding American history at all...Black studies are needed for everyone, and above all for Whites" (Ad Hoc Committee on the Social Studies, 1968, pp. 8-9).

Support for introducing black, Hispanic, or Asian studies arose at a time of intense emotion in American society when minorities rejected the prominence of white males in the conduct of social research, and as its major subjects, as well. Consequently, we saw the proliferation of

studies that responded to a new awareness of who were "the people" in America. Examples of such studies are: Ladner's The Death of White Sociology (1973); Ludwig and Santibaney's The Chicanos: Mexican American Voices (1971); TeSelle's The Rediscovery of Ethnicity: Its Implication for Culture and Politics in America (1973); Cahn's Our Brother's Keeper: The Indian in White America (1969); and Kozol's Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools (1967).

The past outpouring of recommendations for ethnic courses in the curriculum has been more than matched by recent recommendations from British, Australian, and American writers for a multicultural curriculum. Lynch (1983, 1986) is a leader in England, Bullivant (1981a, 1981b, 1984) in Australia, and Banks (1981a, 1981b) in the United States. Banks and Lynch (1986) joined forces to organize a book that explored multicultural education in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and Western Europe. The subtitle of Modgil, Verma, Mallick, and Modgil's (1986) edited volume--The Interminable Debate--captures the sense of years of advocating ideas that have not been translated into curricular practice. If the premises of the argument are not moot--that racism, ethnocentrism, invisibility, and inequality are awful--the curricular consequences to be drawn from them are. Despairingly, Banks concludes, "Its [multicultural education's] biggest problem is that we have not had the will and vision to give it a chance to succeed" (1986, p. 230). Nonetheless, the logic continues to find academic supporters. Ahlquist writes that "Multicultural education...should be reflected in every aspect of classroom and school life" (1989, p. 4). And, perhaps of more importance, it finds political supporters. Note the case of the state of Minnesota requiring all its school districts "to develop 'multicultural and gender-fair' curricula" (Rothman, 1988, p. 1). Here the state is the agent, but by leaving the curricular specifics to local districts, they make them agents, as well. The purpose is stated by a representative of Minnesota's board of education: to develop in students "greater understanding and respect for other people" (p. 1).

Class, gender, and intellectual attributes are the bases of curricular formation in the remainder of this section. Their separate treatment here is essentially organizational; these attributes do not actually operate in isolation either from each other or from the previously discussed bases. What must be understood about these several attributes is that though they may be seen as sociological, biological, and psychological constructs, they are also cultural constructs. That is, how they are defined and what meaning they have are a matter of cultural construal. For educational purposes, that class differences exist is less an issue than how different agents perceive and act upon the prerogatives of class, the nature of equality, the function of schools, and the concomitant curricular implications.

Among the most extensive studies of the connection between SES and curriculum is Anyon's (1981) year-long investigation of elementary classrooms. Their students were distinguished by four social class levels--working class, middle class, affluent professional, and elite executive. Anyon examined the instructional materials, assignments, class discussions, and tests in these classrooms. She found a correlation: the higher the SES of the students in a classroom, the higher the cognitive level of its curricular elements. That this correlation is not inevitable Dillon (1990) demonstrates in her well-documented case study of low reading ability black students in a high school English classroom. The teacher used literature and asked questions that in other settings are associated with higher SES students. When cognitive styles are hierarchically arranged, so are students. Dillon's study provides some grounds for rejecting an invariable association between low SES and cognitive downgrading, but Wilcox concludes from her study of two suburban schools that the propensity to rank students and, therefore, curricular experiences, is located "in the wider society" (1982, p. 303). Thus, the capacity of educators to ameliorate the situation is limited.

Implicit in the cognitive hierarchy that varies by social class is the judgment that different texts are more appropriate for some than for other types of children. Anyon pursued this point in her study of 17 American history textbooks. She found that "the [textbooks'] historical interpretations provide ideological justification" for the "wealthy and powerful" (1979, p. 379). From her study of 19th-century England, Purvis (1984) confirms Anyon's finding, as does Thomas (1988) from his study of schooling in Buffalo during the period 1918-1931. And Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone (1988) provide corroborating text from their research in the pseudonymous working class neighborhood of Somerville, but without the ideological tones of Thomas and Anyon. Somerville High School took pride in its large business education department and annual Business Graduates' Day "when graduates returned and told current students about their careers" (1988, p. 110).

Somerville High graduates successfully found jobs. Thus, Somerville educators resisted the imposition by central administration of additional required academic courses because they reduce the time available for the favored business electives. Giroux argues "that there are complex and creative fields of resistance through which class-, race-, and gender-mediated practices often refuse, reject, and dismiss the central messages of the school" (1983, p. 260). However, the object of resistance by subordinate groups is not necessarily what Giroux anticipates. We infer from Rossman, Corbett, and Firestone's account that Somerville's working-class parents preferred the opportunities provided by their school's commitment to

"order and preparation for the world of work" (1988, p. 126), over those provided by a more academic-oriented curriculum.

The hierarchical arrangement of curricula by SES has a counterpart in what some investigators call "gendered knowledge." "Schools sort and select what knowledge to teach students; most often knowledge by and about nonwhites, and women, is selected out of school knowledge" (Sleeter & Grant, 1985, p. 52). Sleeter and Grant drew this conclusion from their case study of a junior high school that intended to develop an "appreciation of human diversity" (p. 38). Earlier, Anyon observed that what is taught at school--"school knowledge"--is a social product, that is, someone selects it. Those who traditionally made the selections--textbook writers, publishing companies, and educators--acted in terms of norms that did not grant full respect to women. Thus, women have been overlooked or demeaned, on the one hand, or channeled into certain curricular areas, on the other (1979, p. 382). Anyon's work in textbooks has been buttressed by that of other groups which, in pursuit of fairness and equity as they see it, document the limitations of textbooks (see Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977; Baltimore Feminist Project, 1976).

Instructional materials or courses that honor either males or females may promote limitations for one and opportunities for the other. Purvis (1984) describes the dame school in 19th-century England which reflected a particular cultural view of females and SES. It offered girls a New Testament lesson, some reading, and a lot of knitting and sewing. With this same cultural view extant, Grafton, Miller, Smith, Vegoda, and Whitfield lament the disproportionate enrollment of English secondary school girls in a child care course. They note with strong approval of Sweden's requirement--reflecting a different cultural view--that "home management, typing and technology are to be compulsory for both boys and girls at junior and senior level" (1983, p. 168).

Measor (1983) has another angle on the matter of gendered knowledge. Based on 18 months of observation of 11- to 13-year olds in science courses, she identifies a "gender code of behavior." In science classes, girls liked work that involved baby chicks and disliked work that involved dissection, fire, getting dirty, and pyrotechnical displays with chemicals and electricity (pp. 173-177). Though Measor acknowledges the culture-based dispositions of female students, she does not unqualifiedly endorse a "feminine science" which would draw its experiments and examples from phenomena more closely allied to the world of females (p. 190). What she, Purvis, Anyon, Grant, and Sleeter want is a curriculum that neither bars females from opportunities that schools may offer, nor educates males and females with constricted views about their place in society.

Differential judgments about students that have bearing on curricular decisions derive not only from SES and gender but also from assessments of students' academic achievement, interest, and ability. An outcome of these assessments is the tracking of students into separate curricular channels distinguishable by instructional materials, pace of instruction, and, as Anyon (1981) has shown, the cognitive level of classroom discussions, assignments, and tests. Tracking is a widespread phenomenon (see Rosenbaum, 1976; Page, 1987; Cusick, 1983; and Oakes, 1985). Teachers support tracking as a viable means to do academic justice to students of diverse intellectual abilities. Bowles sees an insidious motivation behind tracking: "vocational schools and tracks were developed for the children of working families. The academic curriculum was preserved for those who would later have the opportunity to make use of book learning" (1972a, p. 44). In fact, in addition to the obvious, designated tracks, high schools contain many cubbyholes for students based on judgments of their ability, as well as of their conduct and emotional condition (see Peshkin, in press). The curriculum in each cubbyhole, as in each track, has the appearance of similarity, in that the subjects taught bear the same name--English, social studies, or mathematics, for example. Beyond the common names, there is little else that is common in the curriculum that students experience who are put away in one of a school's several academic resting places.

Cusick (1983) examined curriculum development in three American high schools and was struck by the proliferation of elective courses. Schools rationalize the resulting curricular elongation (see also Powell, Farrar, and Cohen, 1985) as meeting students' interests and needs, if not the test of "relevance." The curricular pendulum, however, is swinging increasingly toward the expansion of the required curriculum, argued variably on pedagogical, economic, or military grounds. In this regard, see, for example, California's S.B. 813 (Odden & Marsh, 1988; Loren, 1985). It also is swinging toward concern for the lack of consensus about "what a proper high school education should be," say Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985, p. 65), a situation which they analyze as inviting a greater empowerment of teachers as agents of curriculum development (1985, pp. 309-321).

The most damaging grounds for establishing a fitting curriculum is one based on the judgment of an entire group's ability as inferior. For the most part, it no longer is socially acceptable to make such sweepingly condemning statements, though Jensen's (1969) work is presumed to provide warrant for them. At one time it was acceptable, however, as Ball (1984) reminds us in his study of the colonial curriculum in Africa. Europeans generally believed that Africans were genetically inferior; indeed, when they did well on external examinations, they were given credit not for intelligence but for possessing prodigious memories (pp. 136-137). The growth

of trade schools in some parts of Africa, and also the limited availability of academic post-primary schooling, developed from judgments about African intelligence and the colonial government's need for low-level labor. Whatever the particular motivation of colonial governments as agents, the putative civilizing effect of the Western-based curriculum often added fervor to their efforts to educate colonized peoples (Sutton, 1971).

Colonial settings are rife with attempts to establish a fitting curriculum for the "natives." Adaptation is the term most often applied to the movement to identify a curriculum drawn from some agent's assessment of what education the natives needed that would do justice to their home culture. In Africa, the British were the prime architects of adaptation (see Foster, 1965; Ball, 1984), in contrast to the French who thought that the education suitable for French children also was suitable for African children ("Reorganization of Education in French Equatorial Africa," 1965, pp. 53-58). As we have already seen in the reactions of Cole (1960) and his compatriots to an indigenous rather than an external school-leaving examination, African parents and their children resisted the adapted curriculum. Foster (1966) explained why: the more closely the curriculum for African children approximated that received by English children at home, the greater the economic promise it contained. In short, a fully academic, in contrast to an adapted, curriculum truly provided useful vocational education in the modern sectors of colonial society; the most prestigious, well-paying jobs were the reward for undergoing an education that was unadapted in traditional terms.

In the complex intersection of culture and curriculum, the purposes of ethnic maintenance, assimilation, economic opportunity, and political pride and nation-building often conflict. Variant curricula follow from each. The mix and priority given these purposes varies with the circumstances of colonialism, recent independence, and resurgent nationalism. South Africa's government framed the Bantu Education Act of 1953 in the language of opportunity for blacks and respect for preserving Bantu culture; in fact, behind a facade of ethnic maintenance was the reality of a white regime that precluded blacks from acquiring skills to compete with whites for jobs (LaBelle, 1979). In contrast, New Zealand's 19th-century educational policy aimed to assimilate the Maori (Ogbu, 1978); Maori schools were to resemble European schools in content and language. Today, the policy for Maori is neither adaptive nor assimilative but bicultural, which is intended as a nod in both, otherwise antagonistic, directions. Newly independent nations face a problem comparable to that of older nations with minority subgroups: how to abandon the vestiges of the colonial curriculum, which enjoyed considerable support among parents and children, while doing justice to the needs of national integration and cultural maintenance, which have the prestige of logic and policy behind them

but not the hearts of school clientele. It is ironic, but understandable, that newly independent nations urgently introduce curriculum changes--teaching in the vernacular and offering compulsory courses in agriculture--that resemble those of the rejected adaptation policies of colonial times (see Urch, 1968 and the early 5-year plans of nations in Africa and Asia).

Research Prospects

It is overstatement to picture schools as battlefields for competing conceptions of culture and curriculum, though for brief, painful moments the battlefield image might not be exaggeration. The sense of sides at war comes to mind in the Kanawha County textbook controversy, as it also does in censorship issues and in multilingual countries which try to establish one particular language, instead of some others, as the medium of instruction in school, unaware of how intimately the mother tongue is situated in the identity of its speakers (LePage, 1964, p. 21). The honoring of one language and the perceived denigration of others can lead to bloodshed.

It is not overstatement to picture schools as arenas for contending views about what subjects to teach, the relative importance of each subject, what content to emphasize within a subject, the level of cognitive challenge at which to pitch a subject, as well as what is appropriate regarding instructional matter, pedagogical styles, types of tests, and so forth. Of the many contenders, or agents, as I have designated them, some are winners--their conceptions find a place in the curriculum. Many more are losers, that is, given a dearth of supporters and also the constraints of time and place, there is not room enough to contain most of what they press schools to do. Given, however, that curricula are subject to change, for agents to have lost at one moment does not condemn their perspective to oblivion. Education is in the political domain of society, and accordingly, schooling is subject to change in response to new political alignments. This is true at a macrolevel in centralized systems and at both macro and microlevels in decentralized systems.

There is much to learn about the shaping of curriculum at the macro and microlevel from studies conducted within a single nation, as well as from comparative studies conducted simultaneously within several nations. Some agents, political parties and religious groups, for example, direct their efforts toward the curriculum as a whole, their ideology applicable as the basis for an entire curriculum. Learning about the educational commitments of political parties through single-nation and comparative studies would be useful, as would similar studies directed at other agents which have an ideology that is foundational to an entire curriculum.

Single-nation and comparative studies could address other agents--professional organizations within the field of education and interest groups--in order to understand the origin and nature of their conceptions, the means they use to get them enacted, and what success they have had. These agents may have an ideology, as does the Chamber of Commerce, the National Education Association, or the National Association of Secondary School Principals; but it is not likely to be as explicitly articulated or as fixed as that, say, of some religious and political groups. And these agents may address only one aspect of the curriculum--the science or social studies subjects--or one level of schooling--elementary rather than secondary. It would be instructive, moreover, to develop historical accounts of the agents, taking note of the nature and rationale of their changing curricular recommendations and cultural antecedents.

We have much to learn from single-nation, comparative, and historical studies that focus on the work of the agents. At a descriptive level, we know something of value about a society from learning about the number, type, budget, and operation of organizations that address issues of curriculum. Do they operate in an open market? What is the nature of the competition among agents? Are there groups with interests but not agents? Whose interests do the agents represent? Take the case of agents in Spain before and after Franco's regime. Witte (1986) identifies a number of organizations committed to educational development such as the National Research Centre for Educational Development, Supreme Council for Scientific Research, Educational Science Institute, and the National Institute of Educational Science. It would be useful to learn if these organizations existed in Franco's time, and, if they did, how they worked before and after Franco's death.

Behind the facile expression that schools should serve all the children of all the people is the reality of some groups gaining more benefits than others. Stratifications of knowledge, by gender or social class, include some and exclude other types of students in terms of what they are taught and who is eligible to receive the instruction. There is need for continuing studies of the nature and effects of such stratification, focusing on Eisner's (1979) null curriculum--what is not taught--and on the null group--who is not invited or encouraged to learn. There also is need for studies directed at the consequences of curricula shaped by local control.

In rural and fundamentalist Christian schools, the close fit between a student's school experience and parental expectations clearly satisfied parents (Peshkin, 1978, 1986). However, since rural and Christian schools exist in a society where other values prevail, paradoxes thereby arise. In the rural school, parents accepted levels of intellectual challenge that many other school systems would not tolerate. And the rural school, by omission, endorsed the

racism that often prevails in its host community. It is easy to imagine a curriculum that the rural constituency would reject. By being responsive to other values, such a curriculum would alter the prevailing close fit between the culture of the rural subgroup and the school. Paradoxes also arise from the practices of many Christian schools which, by their rigid commitment to doctrinal orthodoxy, denigrate other believers and nonbelievers alike. Though such schools exist because of our national commitment to the principle of pluralism, their curriculum may give no credence to this principle.

With regard to Christian and other types of nonpublic schools, both denominational and nondenominational, the concept of fit suggests the promise of several inquiries. Nonpublic schools may originate in the desire of a particular subgroup to establish a school that fits their own cultural orientation, a school formed in particular class, ideological, or pedagogical terms. Research that is either contemporary or historical, single- or multi-nation, would reveal a great deal about subgroups themselves (see Musgrove, 1982, p. 131) and the paradoxes they give rise to, as well as about the school and society in which rejection of public education is taking place.

It would be productive to examine the consequences of close culture-curriculum fits, asking whose interests, needs, and values do such close fits neglect or exclude, and what price may be paid by students who are being instructed by such curricula. One could get at the dynamics of maintaining a particular fit by a study of the hiring practices of school districts, attending to the details of what emphasis they give to the candidate's intellectual accomplishments, nonacademic activities, residential background, university attended, etc.

The issue of whom schools should serve is at least implicit in all considerations of fit. For a while it may be very appealing to see one's children attending a school that in some sense was fashioned in one's own image, the results of this fashioning could be detrimental to other highly valued interests. This is a problem whether schools are controlled by a centralized ministry of education or by a decentralized system such as that of the United States. The problem is damnably palpable in the latter instance because Americans are accustomed to thinking of schools as their own, of feeling a possessiveness and attendant prerogatives that belie the fact of broader societal interests. Thereby hangs another set of studies. They would examine the interplay of policies and pressures that arise from local, state, and federal interests, focusing on the particular types of curricular fits pursued by agents at each level.

A whole range of studies is possible under the conditions of centralized control. Such control tends to put schools at some distance from its users. The distance may be bridged by local-

level bodies, such as school boards and school councils, that connect parents to their children's schools. How do parents and other agents see their role in regard to curriculum? Are there channels through which protest can be registered short of the next national election? Is it the case, as Horio (1988) claims in Japan, that teachers have no freedom to determine the curriculum and parents have no freedom to affect what their children learn? What would diverse samples of Japanese and American parents say about whose values their schools should reflect and how responsive the curriculum should be to local subcultural variations?

The fact that one group's good fit is another group's mis-fit indicates the desirability of cost-benefit analyses that ask, What is lost in the course of gaining something else? Do the gains amply compensate the losses, and how can such estimations be made? Who is benefiting and who is losing? Since there is no curricular vacuum anywhere, something new always enters the curricular field with something old in its way, so to speak. Thus, curricular change involves trade-offs, something relinquished for something introduced. Perhaps no place more than in the third-world nations is the problem of trade offs more painful. As long-colonized, newly independent states, they try to throw off the stigmatized vestiges of their colonial curriculum; indigenize their curriculum (see, e.g., Toure, 1965) to give honor to their history, literature, art, and languages; and introduce courses that reflect their urgent need for survival in economic, political, and technological terms. The curriculum-making policies and practices of these nations provide unlimited opportunities for serious scholarship.

Curricular accommodations made to get teachers closer to the cultural affinities of their students (as in Au and Jordan, 1980; Au and Mason, 1981) are resisted by those who fear that such students might thereby remain overly attached to their home culture, at the expense of the national or dominant culture. Such fears are manifest in the passage by state legislatures of laws that make English the official language, and in the antagonism many lay persons and educators direct to bilingual education. What, in fact, are the outcomes of culturally accommodated classrooms? Are their students any less attached to national values and symbols? Are the pedagogical gains of such schools and classrooms acquired at the cost of lessened devotion to national well-being?

From another angle, one that supports the idea of curricular accommodations to students' subcultural distinctions, there is need for further examination of the broker function (Dillion, 1990) that teachers play in such classrooms. How do they learn the broker role? Does the role differ with students from different subcultures? With the age of the children? With the subject being taught? With the larger cultural context within which the school and classroom are

located? Are there circumstances in which such curricular accommodation is unsound? Is there an upper limit to the age and grade of the students when it should be stopped?

The premise underlying all curriculum change is that educators can modify their usual practices. Yet most recommendations for redefining a prevailing culture-curriculum fit refer to schools where some such fit already prevails as the status quo, and where, therefore, educators, if not students and parents, have learned to work in the service of this fit. Moreover, Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) cite the findings of Doyle and Ponder (1977) to note that "teachers were most receptive to proposals for change that fit with current classroom procedures," and those of Cuban (1984) to note that "certain formats like the recitation persist because they fit the environmental demands of classrooms" (p. 516). That educators are capable of modifying how they perform is far from reassuring. Can and will they make the modifications entailed by proposals for change? The energy, effort, emotion, and care different individuals invest in any extant fit dispose them to like things staying basically as they are. We do not understand sufficiently well what their cultural stakes are and how they attach students, teachers, parents, and school board members to a particular curricular state of affairs. The consequence of not being well understood is resistance (Giroux, 1983), although resistance is made not only to proposals for change but also to existing states of affairs.

When superintendents, as agents, strive to change some aspect of curriculum, what are they up against? What is the magnitude of what must be relinquished by those who have been party to a particular fit? Do superintendents focus on the out-there of instructional materials or methods and fail to grasp the inertia of the in-here of cultural orientations, the personal antecedents of what goes on out there? Metz (1986) captures the complexity of the task of change as it pertains to teachers, but her point applies equally well to others:

> A principal who wants to change a faculty culture must try to understand it and its sources, and then try to find a way to change the circumstances which gave rise to it, to give currency to alternative interpretations of common events, and to offer other, more constructive, ways of meeting the needs it serves (p. 222).

Case studies of principals and others, both successes and failures, would provide much needed insight into curricular undertakings that are driven by education-oriented governors and state legislatures, as well as by the much publicized reports of high status, blue-ribbon committees. Promising insights also would result from studies of the fate of any report or conference that makes formal recommendations for curriculum changes. Such case histories could prove to be usefully sobering documents.

These many research possibilities may well founder, however, without increasingly sophisticated conceptualizations of fundamental matters, such as the question of whom the schools should serve, and the related one of what constitutes a fitting curriculum. The manifold perspectives that can be brought to bear on the determination of fit is a concomitant of an open, democratic society. These manifold perspectives emerge from the numerous subcultural variations which compose contemporary societies. While power may give precedence to the interests of the mighty, the ubiquity of voices speaking on behalf of equality and justice can leaven the impact of this precedence and appropriately complicate the establishment of the culture-curriculum relationship.

Confronted with an array of voices, and thus of divergent purposes--for assimilation, ethnic or community maintenance, economic competitiveness, status maintenance or reversal, citizenship, ad infinitum--professionals and laypersons alike are understandably confused, if not moved to avoidance, lethargy, and inaction. Would not agents of fit, from teachers in the classroom to bank presidents who chair blue-ribbon committees to would-be education presidents, be helped by knowing who their competition is? By knowing that the viability of their competition is testimony to the intellectual and moral strength of their society? And also by knowing that since wishes are not horses, beggars don't ride. Thus, making recommendations for curricular change is not tantamount to having a magic wand able to wave in tomorrow's new culture-curriculum fit. Which fact gives fits to the uninformed? We can never know enough about the cultural roots of curriculum, who is attached to these roots, and to what ends, if any, the elements of curriculum will relate. Chief Poropot, speaking prophetically, reasoned that the antiquity of his tribe's language would insure its survival. His prophesy may be wishful thinking. History better supports his assertion that learning Portuguese is necessary for his people to defend themselves. For this judgment, he earns his spurs as an agent, although future generations of Kaipo could well construe the entry of the Portuguese language into Kaipo life as a major step toward the extinction of their traditional culture. The fitting of Kaipo children into modern Brazilian society by their access to Portuguese may simultaneously unfit them for sustaining a Kaipo society of any integrity, let alone the society of their parents and grandparents. Exploring the complications attending the many fits of culture and curriculum strike me as worthy scholarly undertaking, one that bears heavily on critical issues of personal and collective identity, of who we are and who we can and mean to be.

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